consideration since then, inter alia, in consultation with the Deptt. of Environment. The Govt. of India have appointed on 5-9-1986 a High-Level Committee of Experts, headed by Dr. B. D. Nag Chaudhuri, former Vice-Chancellor of Jawahar Lal Nehru University to study in depth the impact of the proposed development of the Gandhamardan Bauxite Project in Orissa on ecology and environment. A final view will be taken by the Govt. of India after the receipt of the recommendations of the High-Level Committee of Experts.

Proposed Sponge Iron Plant in Bellary Hospet area of Karnataka

1115. DR. BAPU KALDATE:
SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY:

Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have shelved the proposed sponge iron plant in the Bellary Hospet area of Karnataka; and

(b) if so, what are the reasons for shelving the said sponge iron plant?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI K. C. PANT): (a) and (b) The project which was at one time to be located in the Bellary Hospet area of Karnataka was for a steel plant and not a sponge iron plant. It has not been possible to take substantive steps for setting up this plant so far due to constraints on resources.

However, a proposal has been received from the Karnataka State Industrial Investment & Development Corporation (KSIIDC) Limited for setting up a sponge iron plant in collaboration with Sponge Iron India Limited (SIIL). The proposal is under consideration and the location for this plant has not been decided.

Agitation against Reservation Policy in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka

1116. SHRI N. E. BALARAM: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the recent agitations against the reservation policy of the Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka Governments;

(b) whether it is a fact that the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh had recently written to the Centre to take initiative for a national consensus on the reservation policy; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF WELFARE (SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The Chief Minister, Andhra Pradesh had written on 21st September, 1986 to take initiative for convening a national conference. The Government of India is of the view that the *status quo* should be maintained until a consensus on the subject is evolved.

Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme

1117. SHRI SHANKER SINH VAGHELA:
SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE:
SHRI LAL K. ADVANI:
SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN:
SHRI KAILASH PATI MISHRA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of landless families in each state which got gainful employment for hundred days or more in a year under the Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme and the wages earned by them on an average during the year 1985-86 and 1986 till date; and

(b) the expenditure incurred on this programme during the year 1985-86 and 1986-87 till date and estimated for each of the next three years?